



**Australian
Privacy
Foundation**

G.P.O. Box 1196
Sydney NSW 2001

enquiries@privacy.org.au

<http://www.privacy.org.au/>

17 September 2008

Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig
Suite MG 64
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6277 7200
Fax: (02) 6273 4406

Dear Minister,

RE: Release of patient records for Medicare auditing-

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Health Sub Committee of the Australian Privacy Foundation (APF).

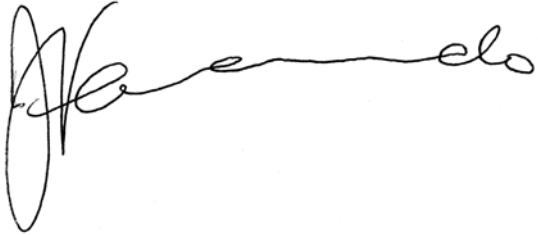
We note the report in The Australian on September 13 2008 that you are proposing revised audit arrangements that would "allow non-medically qualified officials to inspect material from patients' medical records".

The Foundation is generally supportive of your department's moves to require practitioners to verify their claims for Medicare eligible services as a reasonable and responsible way of ensuring that taxpayer funds are spent appropriately. Yet we remain concerned about the potential for breaches of patient privacy.

APF's Chair, Roger Clarke, advised the Board after he met with you recently that you were looking to establish an effective dialogue with this organisation.

We believe that the proposal reported in The Australian is a matter on which a privacy advocacy perspective is vital. We would therefore be pleased to contribute to a consultation on the topic.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juanita Fernando'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and 'F'.

Juanita Fernando
Chair
Health Sub Committee

Board Member, Australian Privacy Foundation

Contact Details for the APF and its Board Members are at:
<http://www.privacy.org.au/About/Contacts.html>